

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 16, 2009

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing on behalf of the Members of Congress who unanimously approved a resolution supporting a posthumous pardon for Jack Arthur Johnson. As you know, under Article II, Section 2 of the United States Constitution the President "shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States..." We hope you will heed the call of Congress and grant the first African-American Heavyweight Champion of the World a pardon to rectify this injustice.

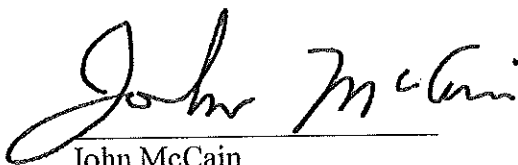
The resolution is co-sponsored by both Republicans and Democrats, including the Majority Leader of the Senate, and passed the full Senate on June 24, 2009. It is supported by many members of the Congressional Black Caucus and passed the House on July 29, 2009.

Jack Johnson was the first African-American Heavyweight Champion of the World. In 1912, he was arrested for violating the Mann Act, which outlawed the transportation of women across state lines for "immoral purposes." While the law was intended to fight prostitution, prosecutors charged Mr. Johnson with violating this law when he escorted a woman of a different race across state lines. He was the first person convicted under the Mann Act. Mr. Johnson served 10 months in prison on these charges brought forward clearly to keep him away from the boxing ring where he continued to defeat his white opponents.

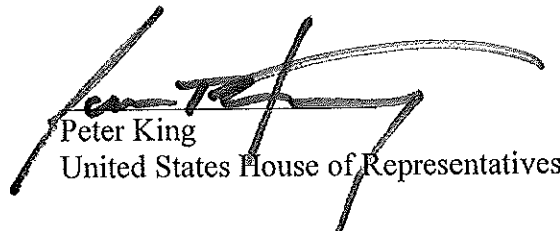
Less than a week after the resolution passed both chambers, we wrote to you asking that you give full consideration of Congress' request and swiftly issue a posthumous pardon for Jack Johnson. Regrettably, we have not received a response from you or any member of your Administration. It is our hope that you will be eager to right this wrong and erase an act of racism that sent an American citizen to prison.

Mr. President, Sunday will mark the 97th anniversary of Jack Johnson's arrest. We hope you will rectify this injustice against Jack Johnson, his family and his legacy.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senate



Peter King
United States House of Representatives